

## THE CHAIRMAN'S DISPATCH

### The Full Nelson

If you read *The Times* or *The Daily Telegraph* on 21 October 2005 I hope you saw this In memoriam:

**NELSON – Vice Admiral Horatio Viscount, ‘The Hero, who in the moment of Victory, fell covered with Immortal glory’ 21<sup>st</sup> October 1805. The 1805 Club and The Nelson Society.**

It is probably one of the smallest things commemorating the bicentenary. It's simplicity makes it powerful. Maybe you missed it? If you did it is hard to imagine how the Trafalgar Festival as a whole could have avoided your attention!

It has been a truly astonishing action-packed four months: the International Fleet Review, the Trafalgar son et lumière, the International Festival of the Sea, The New Trafalgar Dispatch, The Trafalgar Way, The Emirates Thames Nelson Flotilla, Nelson's departure from Merton and Portsmouth, The Trafalgar Heroes Weekend, The Battle of Trafalgar Conference, The Trafalgar Woods Project, the liturgical Nelson Mass at St Saviours Church, St Albans, around the world bell-ringing, a thousand blazing beacons, the Trafalgar Square show for 10,000 people, the National Service at St Paul's Cathedral, the naval wreath-laying ceremony off Cape Trafalgar, the Queen dining in the Great Cabin for the first time, Trafalgar Dinners and speeches everywhere, 6,000 events on Trafalgar Day alone, Nelson's Prayer read at church services, exhibitions, not least Nelson & Napoleon, an armada of books, magazine and newspaper articles, memorabilia.....and The Trafalgar Captains Memorial Project!

One is tempted to imagine how our descendents will marvel at the way the country rose to the occasion as it was gripped by 'Nelson fever' and wonder at the fact that the commemorations sprang from the grass roots of our society rather than coming top down from central government. As a result, when it all came together, it took many by surprise, not least our public service media!

I was delighted to meet so many members across the country during the Festival, many for the first time, and as ever was struck by your enthusiasm and belief in what we set out to achieve. Welcome too to our new members, including those who are descended from the Trafalgar captains. I hope the Club brings you many years of pleasure. Meeting so many of you and experiencing your kindness helps to explain how you imbue the Club with that sense that we are a band of brothers and sisters.

You may recall that at the beginning of the year I asked you to record your involvement in the bicentenary commemorations. We should like to produce a supplement to the first issue of next year's *Kedge Anchor* bringing together the members' record of the bicentenary. Therefore may I ask you all to send in your photographs and descriptions of your personal experiences of the events you went to and those, no matter how small, you arranged yourselves or with others. The more we receive from you the more meaningful the supplement will be.

A great many people, younger people included, are now much more aware of the significance of both Nelson and Trafalgar than they were in January and the Club is benefiting from this interest. We are tantalisingly close to achieving our target of 500 members in 2005. For me personally, just watching how the huge crowds have responded to the declaiming of The New Trafalgar Dispatch, Nelson has been re-established as Britain's greatest hero. This is a fine legacy for the Club to build on.

The legacies of the bicentenary now become the focus of our attention because they will shape the future environment that the Club inhabits. Some of them are already apparent, such as The Trafalgar Way and The Trafalgar Woods, but many others that are less obvious will emerge during the shake-out in the coming months. All will need to be worked on if we are to both maintain continuity and maximise the momentum. The Club will be as energetic as ever in this context.

In fact in the last few weeks, just as the Trafalgar Festival reached its climax, the Club has been the catalyst for a matchless event on Monday, 9 January 2006, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lord Nelson's funeral. St Paul's Cathedral will hold Evensong based on the original in 1805.

Only The 1805 Club and the Royal Navy have been given reserved seating. Moreover, the Club has been honoured with *exclusive* access to the Nelson Chamber for a ceremony and service of its very own at Nelson's tomb.

The afternoon will start with a private tea for members of the Club and their guests before the rest of the congregation take their seats in the Cathedral for Evensong. Afterwards Colin White will present *May the Great God*, his lecture on Nelson's religious faith. This will be followed by the Club's special service in the crypt, led by our chaplain the Reverend Peter Wadsworth. It will clearly be an occasion steeped in the spirit of both place and time - a unique poignancy.

There are only 100 places in the Nelson Chamber for the Club's private service so please register your interest with Lynda Sebbage as soon as possible for your special invitation based on the 1805 original and an In Memoriam keepsake that will be given to you at the Cathedral. The booking form with full details comes with this copy of the *Kedge Anchor*.

As we look forward to 2006, may I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year before leaving you to savour once again Garter Knight at Arms' unscripted words at the close of Nelson's funeral service, 'The Hero, who in the moment of Victory, fell covered with Immortal glory'.

**Peter Warwick**

